

January 2000
Volume 2, Issue 1

LAKE TAHOE FOREST
HEALTH CONSENSUS GROUP

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December 21, 1999 FHCG
Meeting
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LAKE TAHOE BASIN FOREST HEALTH CONSENSUS GROUP MINUTES

Welcome to the Lake
Tahoe Basin Forest Health
Consensus Group newsletter.
Our next monthly meeting
will be on January 18, 2000.
We will meet at the Tahoe
Regional Planning Agency
office in Round Hill,
Nevada. If you need
information on the
meeting or the Forest
Health Group, please
contact Mary Powell at
(775) 588-4547, ext 267

*The FHCG also has a Web page
where present and past
newsletters can be located:*

URL:<http://ceres.ca.gov/trpa>

January 18, 2000 Meeting Agenda

Approval of minutes

DFC Interface – Jon Hoefer

EMS Interface – Jon Hoefer

DFC Urban Area – Bill Apger

Regulation Review Speaker –
John Helms

Other Strategy Review

Member Reports

December 21, 1999 Meeting Agenda and Subsequent Minutes

Approval of Minutes

Regulation Review Speaker –
Steve Cannon, Registered
Professional Forester

Forest Service Visuals – Bob
McDowell (Forest Service) and
John Hitchcock (TRPA)

EMS Urban Area – 2nd Reading
for Consensus

DFC Urban Area – Bill Apger
(postponed due to absence of Bill
Apger)

EMS for Urban Interface – Jon
Hoefer

Forest for the Future Conference/
Durango, Colorado Report – Gary
Bowen (postponed)

Volunteers for May 2000 Natural
Resource Conference Field Tour
– Richard Harris

Member Reports

Bin Items

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the November
meeting were approved as
written. Mary Powell was
thanked for her year of dedication
to the FHCG Newsletter.

Regulation Review Speaker – Steve Cannon

Steve Cannon, a Registered
Professional Forester with
Foothill Resource Management,
addressed the group with his
views on the interim regulation.
Below is a summation of his
report. If you would like a
complete copy of his report, along
with a copy of the "Lake Tahoe
Basin 1993 Wildland Inventory"
in which some of his report was
based, please contact Mary
Powell at TRPA.

Address to the Tahoe
Regional Planning Agency
Forest Health Consensus
Group Meeting, December
21, 1999:

"I'm going to begin my address
regarding the 30 inch diameter
maximum harvest regulation by
stating up front that I disagree
with the ordinance and I feel that
it should not be continued. I also
believe that regardless of what
other professional resource
managers or I tell you, there is an
irrational and unscientific side to
this issue which is often clouded
by anthropomorphic emotions.
These emotions must be set aside
in order to assess the Late
Succession/Old Growth
Ordinances in an objective
manner.

The ordinance is unscientific,
irrational, unfair, inadvisable,
unnecessary, uneducated,
unjustified and unenforceable:

1. *Unscientific* – Unscientific in
that it was based on the unproved
assumption that an insufficient
number of older/larger trees exist
on private forest lands within the
Tahoe Basin. No forest inventory
has been done on private lands to
validate this assumption. There is
no scientific data to support the
suggestion that a stand of 30 inch
DBH trees is more biologically
healthy than a stand in which 28
inch trees are predominant. The
30 inch diameter limit for
harvesting is an arbitrary and
simplistic limit that does not
provide for developing a
scientific scheme to improve the
long-term biological health of a
stand of trees. It does not account
for on-site conditions and the
capability of scientific forest
management to manipulate stands
of trees.

2. *Irrational* - Irrational in that it
is based on a general
emotional opposition to
cutting trees, and specifically
to the harvest of larger trees.

3. *Unfair* – Unfair in that owners of productive commercial forest land are prevented from harvesting a valuable commodity that belongs to them. We are not talking about land owned by the taxpayers of the United States or the State of California – this is private land and trees are personal property that is being taken from the owners. Ski areas are exempt. Property owners within 1640 feet of residential, commercial, public service, tourist accommodation and recreation residence lands are exempt from the ordinance.
4. *Inadvisable* – Inadvisable because of its lack of scientific basis and its unfairness.
5. *Unnecessary* – Unnecessary because there are more equitable and successful methods of attaining the objective of healthy forests with a balanced range of diameters.
6. *Uneducated* – The 30 inch diameter restricted harvest ordinance is biologically arrogant and uneducated. This ordinance sets an arbitrary limit without describing in tangible terms the overall stand objective that is desired. It provides no guidelines for what can be done on a piece of property where the nebulous pre-settlement conditions are attained.
7. *Unenforceable* – The ordinance is doomed to failure in the long run. Why? Because it is unenforceable. Because of this ordinance, my clients will not allow any tree

in the 28 inch diameter class to grow to the 30 inch diameter class. Incentives are the way to get things done to accomplish objectives. TRPA should be trying to create an incentive to grow large diameter trees.

In conclusion, I must acknowledge my belief that all owners of non-industrial forest land have certain obligations to other members of the public and to future generations of neighbors, whether those neighbors are next door, downstream or in the next county. Those obligations include: the protection of soil, water and wildlife resources, the enhancement of resources which have been degraded due to previous management practices, the reduction of fire hazard by thinning and brush removal, and the open-mindedness to consider alternatives to traditional management schemes. I believe that the State of California Forest Practice Rules provide the state with sufficient regulatory power to require forest landowners to manage their land in such a way that all but the last obligation are accomplished.

My solution to the question of Chapter 71 and the objective of growing the forests of the Tahoe Basin to a certain condition would be to simply state in clear terms what is desired. Use the federally provided funds to hire professional foresters to develop the plans necessary to accomplish the objectives. The California Forest Practice Rules will give TRPA all the regulatory tools necessary to accomplish those objectives. But the incentive to create those objectives must also be addressed and if a landowner

is giving up a right that they have under state law, then TRPA must compensate the landowner for the lost opportunity. This is a fundamental tenet of our nation and society. “ The end.

After Mr. Cannon read his report, the group suggested the following “ alternatives” to the 30” DBH Regulation:

1. Incentive Based
2. Certification Program
3. Flexibility for Private Land

**Steve Cannon is the first of many scheduled speakers to discuss their viewpoints on the interim regulation. The next speaker will be John Helms at the January 18, 2000 FHCG Meeting.*



Forest Service Visuals – Bob McDowell and John Hitchcock

Bob McDowell of the Forest Service passed out the “National Forest Landscape Management

Volume 2 “ for the group to peruse.

This document, although somewhat outdated (1974), is an overview of what the Forest Service used for visual resource management. This is a valuable tool for the desired visual condition for urban lots. This system has been used by the forest service for many years, and is incorporated into the forest management plan.

In the report, it mentions that the American people are concerned about the quality of their visual environment. Because of this concern, it has become appropriate to establish the “visual landscape” as a basic resource, to be “treated as an essential part of and receive equal consideration with the other basic resources of the land” (FMS 2380). The dominance elements are the simplest visual recognition parts which make up the characteristic landscape. An observer sees landscapes in terms of 4 important aspects. These 4 characteristics that make up a visual quality are:

- Form
- Line
- Color
- Texture

On all national forest lands, on lots at Lake Tahoe, the visual quality objective is called “partial retention”. The range runs from preservation (wilderness areas) to maximum modification (ski areas). The partial retention visual quality objective is defined on page 32 of this report. If you would like a

copy of this report, please contact Mary Powell at TRPA.

The Forest Service Urban Lot Manager, Brian Garrett, has some digital photos of “before” and “after” pictures of urban lots where thinning, pruning, chipping, etc. has been done. Please contact Brian if you are interested in looking at these photos.

From TRPA’s standpoint, John Hitchcock mentioned that they have a similar system based on the forest service, but instead of looking at large landscape use they actually break it down to the individual scenic units. The only problem is that their system does not deal with urban lots that are not located within the federal highway or state highway corridors.

From a scenic standpoint, John Hitchcock is concerned over introducing a man-made feature into a natural dominated area.

The goal of the scenic program at TRPA is to preserve the scenic quality of the natural landscape in the basin.

The group thanked both Bob and John for their presentation to the FHCG members.

Volunteers for May 2000 Natural Resource Conference Field Tour

The upcoming field tour associated with the meeting of the Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals on May 16-18, 2000 was once again discussed.

The field tour will be on May 17, 2000 from 1-5pm. It is expected that between 300-400 people from all over the country will attend this meeting. There will be four concurrent sessions on May 17, 2000 for them to choose from. Therefore, Richard estimates between 60-100 people may attend the field tour. The conference organizers will provide all transportation. Tour buses may also be utilized.

Rex Harold, Robert McDowell Steve Harcourt, John Coburn and Rich Kentz were asked to fax Richard Harris maps of proposed field sites by January 15th (suggestions from other FHCG members are welcome). A draft field trip route may be presented at the next FHCG meeting in January.

Possible tour guides on the busses between stops to provide background and observations include Steve Chilton, Jon Hoefer, Dave Roberts (or Rich Kentz), John Coubrn and a USFS Representative.

At each stop, someone knowledgeable about the activities will be present to discuss them. Possibilities include Rex Harold, Steve Chilton, along with a representative from both the USFS and the League to Save Lake Tahoe.

The objective of the field tour is to showcase the range and variety of forest management activities occurring in the basin which also resending the full spectrum of

social and environmental interest on the FHCG.

Any suggestions for this conference may be directed to Richard Harris at (510) 642-2360 (phone) or (510) 643-5438 (fax).

EMS Urban Area – 2nd Reading for Consensus

The paper by Jon Hoefer was once again on the agenda to reach a second consensus (please see page 4 of the December 1999 issue - volume 1, issue 21) for reference.

Although the group discussed minor changes/modifications to the paper, they reached a second consensus on the way it is presently written. Therefore, the EMS for the urban area has been adopted by the FHCG.



EMS for Urban Interface – Jon Hoefer

Jon Hoefer read the paper on the above topic once again for the group in order to review and make changes (please see page 4 and 5 of the December 1999 issue (volume 1, issue 21).

The “★” denotes the original sentence, followed by suggested changes:

Ecosystem Management Strategy for Urban Interface Zone:

STRATEGY

No change

GUIDELINES

Maintenance of Vegetation:

No suggested changes

Soil and Watershed:

Change: Take out ending of sentence “ accumulation of dead wood, standing or down, will be removed”.

Wildlife:

Change: the word “bases” to “basis”

Desired Future Condition in the Urban Interface Zone:

Vegetation Conditions:

★ Trees in age classes from seedlings to over-mature

Change to: Trees in all age classes from seedlings to over-mature

★ Species composition of the forest type represented

★ Density of trees at 60% of less crown cover

Change to: Crown density appropriate to reduce likelihood of crown fire

Add: Pruning to not reduce the live crown ratio to 1/3

Add: Pruning from lower 8’ of 75% of trees

Add: Prune dead limbs (ladder fuels)

Add: Trees will be pruned to leave a 1/3 – 2/3 live crown/height ratio

Add: No more than 1/3 of live branches pruned at one time

Add: In stands where the trees are of even height you should feather the pruning with variable height pruning that is in the 1/3-2/3 range

Add: Feathered pruning of limbs to reduce ladder fuels and maintain esthetics

★ Crowns of individual trees not touching (*take out sentence*)

★ Occasional dead snags beyond 200 feet of urban property line.

Change: Occasional snags with consideration to safety.

★ Mosaic of openings and thickets where lodgepole pine is the predominant species (suggestion: take out sentence)

- ★ Limbs pruned from lower 8 feet of 75% of trees

Change: Limbs pruned to reduce both ladder fuels and spread of crown fire. Another suggestion: Prune limbs to reduce rate of firespread.

- ★ No dead shrubs within 100 feet of urban property line.

Change: No dead shrubs near urban property lines.

- ★ Most shrubs are low growing species.

Change: Encourage low growing species.

- ★ Tall shrubs, such as manzanita and tobacco bush, are absent or widely spaced, especially under canopy of trees and within 100 feet of urban property line.

Change: Individual tall shrubs, or isolated clumps of tall shrubs, are widely spaced. (sentence needs to be reworked)

- ★ Spaces between shrubs vegetated with perennial grasses and forbs or covered with duff.

Change: Spaces between shrubs are vegetated with perennial grasses and forbs are covered with duff.

Watershed conditions:

- ★ No evidence of soil erosion

Change: No evidence of excessive soil erosion.

- ★ Stream environment zone undisturbed

Change: Stream environment zones undisturbed

- ★ Damaged watershed restored

Change: Damaged watersheds restored

- ★ Service roads, bike and hiking trails, and utility rights of way with BMP installed (Suggestion: take this paragraph out)

Wildlife Conditions:

- ★ Special interest species habitat preserved

Change: Special status species habitat preserved (Other suggestions: Species habitat preserved as listed as sensitive, rare, endangered or threatened; Another suggestion: Do consideration is given to species of special status)

- ★ Functional riparian areas

****The Biological Advisory Group (BAG) should review the “Wildlife Conditions” of this paper for input into this section*****

General comments and suggestions for incorporation included:

- Paper should have scenic quality thresholds met
- Add visual paragraph or section to the EMS.
- Make sure pruning is done at appropriate times for wildlife considerations
- Perhaps all the “numbers” used in the paper need not be specific since situations do vary.
- Fire protection breaks need to be considered
- Take advantage of natural breaks in vegetation and natural landscape features

- Width of zone does not need to be a “set” distance

- Pruning time period specified for health of trees and wildlife habitat. T&E species

- Distance between canopy needs to be addressed

- Wildlife section needs to be strengthened

Member Reports

The below paper was submitted by Jon Hoefer for review. It was not discussed at the December FHCG Meeting. For future reference, this document is dated December 8, 1999:

FOREST HEALTH STRATEGY FOR THE GENERAL FOREST ZONE

Higher land capability and accessibility in this zone will be used to plan frequent and varied treatments to achieve the desired future condition. Practices of the past, especially the substantial removal of all trees in the Comstock mining period of the late 1800's and early 1900's, transformed the forests into predominantly even-aged stands of mid-sized and mid-aged trees, where older and younger age class stands are lacking. The goal, to restore pre-European settlement ecological conditions as rapidly as possible, will require systematic, planned action to preserve remaining stands of larger, older trees. Growing these older stands, along with a large

portion of younger stands toward LSOG will be the focus for decades. A percentage of the zone will be planned for establishing and growing seedling trees.

FOREST HEALTH STRATEGY FOR THE NATURAL PROCESS EMPHASIZED ZONE

Management in this zone will be primarily through the use of natural ecological processes, especially fire. Apply fire to areas of least risk initially so as to create a mosaic pattern of lower fuels. As fuel loading is reduced in portions of the zone, fire may be extended to more hazardous portions where the forest is dense and fuel loading is high. In some areas, pre-fire treatment practices may be necessary. These pre-treatment practices to thin the forest or to reduce fuel loading will not extend new roads into the zone, but may utilize aerial tree removal. Natural ignition fires will be suppressed when there is high risk of damage to the ecosystem or the potential for serious damage if the fire escapes from the zone. Other natural processes, such as outbreaks of insect and disease, may be controlled where there is unacceptable threat to achieving the DFC.

FOREST HEALTH STRATEGY FOR THE NATURAL PROCESS REQUIRED ZONE

Management in this zone will primarily assure that natural ecological processes are able to

occur without interference by people. Though forests in this zone are for the most part least influenced by past practices, fire has been excluded for nearly a century. Restoring fire on a cyclic schedule is the most significant natural tool for achieving and maintaining the desired future condition – pre-European settlement conditions. Both planned and unplanned fire ignition may be necessary until natural fire alone, along with all other natural process, can sustain the system. No naturally occurring fire should be suppressed except where it is an imminent threat to ecosystems or tangible property in neighboring zones.

FOREST HEALTH STRATEGY FOR THE RECREATION ZONE

Manage the zone to provide a safe and attractive forest setting commensurate with the type of recreation activities occurring. Within developed sites such as campgrounds, recreation residence tracts, picnic areas and resorts the strategy should be similar to that in the urban zone where safety of users and property are a key factor. Where recreation complexes are not protected from fire by urban interface, a fuel break system may be included. Portions of the zone that have intensive recreation use and some improvements, such as the forested area between cleared ski trails, will be managed comparable to the General Forest zone with additional provisions for human safety.

FOREST HEALTH STRATEGY FOR ROAD AND UTILITY CORRIDORS

Management along major roads and highways that traverse through all zones require attention to safety of travelers. These narrow corridors will be frequently surveyed for hazardous trees and other conditions that are potentially unsafe for travelers. Unacceptable hazards will be abated. Management along electric power transmission lines will be surveyed for trees that could ignite a wildfire. Unacceptable conditions will be abated. These corridors for roads and utilities may also be managed as part of a fuel break system in which the DFC would be similar to that for urban interface zone.



Upcoming Meetings and Events

Forest Health Consensus Group (FHCG) Meeting

January 18, 2000

9:30AM

The next meeting will be held at the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency offices in Round Hill, Nevada. Please contact Mary Powell at (775) 588-4547 for further information.

Tahoe Regreen Meeting

February 29, 2000

9:30AM – 2:00PM

The next Regreen Meeting will be held on the MS Dixie. For complete meeting details please contact Susan Marie Hagen, Regreen Coordinator, at (530) 541-2433.

Watershed Assessment Workshop

January 26, 2000 (North Shore)

January 27, 2000 (South Shore)

Future details will be forthcoming. For more information, please contact Linda Massey at the Forest Service at (530) 573-2600.

Bin Items

What is the possibility of touring the Park Cattle Company's forest health restoration project? *Due

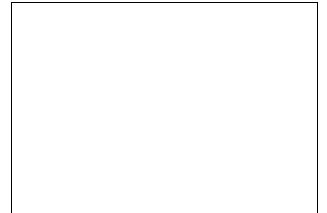
to time constraints, this was not discussed at the meeting.

FHCG Meeting Attendees

The attendees at the December FHCG Meeting were: Steve Cannon, J. B. Lekumberry, Mary Powell, Richard Adams, Ken Anderson, Rex Harold, Robert McDowell, Marie Barry, Steve Chilton, John Hitchcock, Tim Rochelle, John Cobourn, Brian Wilkinson, Jon Hoefer, Rich Kentz, Richard Harris, Shirley Taylor, Mary Jo Elpers, Steve Lewis, Steve Harcourt, John WheBlanc, Shane Romsos.

**Lake Tahoe Basin Forest Health
Consensus Group
C/o Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
P.O. Box 1038
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



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